

The 'Be a Friend to your Dog' Program in Remote Indigenous Communities: Schoolchildren and Educator Perceptions

J. Lloyd, Eileen Fletcher, Dr Sophie Constable, R. Sorin

School of Veterinary & Biomedical Sciences, James Cook University, Townsville, QLD 4811.

School of Education, James Cook University, Cairns, QLD 4870.

This paper will introduce and evaluate a teaching resource package developed by Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC) entitled 'Be a Friend to your Dog' (BAFTYD). Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory (NT) of Australia have stated the need for raising the level of awareness, empathy and responsibility towards community animals. Hence, the BAFTYD program has been delivered to children in the school environment and to community members in remote Indigenous communities in the NT to promote and maintain positive attitudes and behaviour towards animals, and to help people stay safe around dogs. The BAFTYD program aims to work with the community in a manner which is culturally sensitive and agreed upon by all parties. Ultimately, the project aims to support existing teachers in the community and Indigenous animal management workers to deliver key animal welfare messages to schoolchildren and other community members. The provision of the teaching resources to the educators who reside in the community will help to ensure that the program is locally relevant and sustainable.